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the Red River of the North

THE SELKIRK COLONY

ON THE RED RIVER OF THE NORTH

..and its profound influence on early development of the Twin Cities...

A Factual Research

BY

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The Selkirk Colony, founded in 1811, was perhaps the most comprehensive private program of colonization ever attempted on the North American Continent. The vast area set aside for settlement consisted of one hundred and sixteen thousand square miles, in one of the most fertile valleys in the world. This territory extended from Lake Winnipeg on the North, on both sides of the Red River, south into what are now the States of North Dakota and Minnesota.

The founder of the Colony was Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk, who belonged to one of the oldest and most distinguished families of Scotland. An ancestor, Sir James Douglas, fought under Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, and commanded the left wing of his army in the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. This battle resulted in the defeat of the English Army, the taking of Sterling Castle, and the relief from English domination for the next four hundred years. A more detailed account of this high-minded nobleman, a friend of the common people, will be found coincident with the history of "The Colony" in the following narrative.

My renewed interest in the Selkirk Colony was aroused through the re-reading of a biographical sketch of my family written by a kinsman, John Ramsey, Jr., and published in 1900.

I found that a great grandfather, John Smith, and several members of his family, including my great grandmother and grandmother, were among the first groups arriving from Scotland for the Selkirk Colony. They came in the sailing ship "Prince of Wales" and landed at York Factory on the West Coast of Hudson's Bay in September, 1812.

My great grandfather was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, helped survey the Colony and owned considerable property in what are now the States of Minnesota and North Dakota.

In spite of the fact that the Selkirk Colony has had a profound and far-reaching influence on the development, not only of the Red River Valley, but of the northern portion of the Mississippi and the Minnesota Valleys as well, it is surprising how relatively few people know anything about this Colony - how it came about or what happened to it.

There is no doubt but that the fur trade was the most important factor in the exploration and bringing a knowledge of this vast area to the outside world and ultimately in its settlement by white people of European origin. In order to better understand the war for the supremacy of the fur trade and its bearing on the future development of "The Colony", a brief resume' of the origins of the fur companies involved will be of value.

For two centuries, from the time Jacques Cartier of St. Malo, France, made his first voyage down the St. Lawrence River in 1535, the French were in possession of Eastern Canada, the region bordering on the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes and later Louisiana.

During much of this period, the French, with the help of the priests who went ahead to Christianize the Indians, the explorers, fur traders, voyageurs and others, had developed a very profitable fur trade which gradually extended throughout the Great Lakes region, and even to the Red River and Mississippi Valleys.

This profitable trade was viewed with envy by their traditional enemies, the English; and in time a considerable trade in furs was developed by a group of

English adventurers by way of Hudson's Bay, which territory they claimed by reason of discovery.

In 1660 two Frenchmen, Radisson and Groseilliers from Three Rivers, Quebec, took back to Montreal a very valuable collection of furs. The French Governor, for various reasons, confiscated the furs and paid the partners only a fraction of their value.

Radisson and Groseilliers made an appeal to the French Commissioner, but the furs were not returned.

The Frenchmen then went to France and made a direct appeal to the King, but without avail. Resentful of this injustice at the hands of their Government, they went to England and got in touch with the group of adventurers engaged in the fur trade in Hudson's Bay headed by Prince Rupert, cousin of King Charles II. As a result, Radisson and Groseilliers were given direction of two ships for the Hudson's Bay fur trade. Radisson's ship was forced to turn back, but Groseillier's went on to Hudson's Bay, and in 1669 returned with such a valuable cargo of furs that Prince Rupert in 1670 was able to persuade the King to grant a charter to "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading Into Hudson's Bay". This charter gave this group, The Hudson's Bay Company, a monopoly of the trade in furs in the Chartered Lands, that is, all lands drained by the rivers which empty into Hudson's Bay. In addition to the right to trade in furs, the Charter gave the Company complete control over this vast area and even the power of life and death.

By 1685 the Company had organized trading posts over a large territory north, west, and south into the valley of the Red River. The first Governor of The Hudson's Bay Company was John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, a progenitor of Winston Churchill, now Premier of Great Britain.

The rivalry with the French for the fur trade continued, often mixed with violence and bloodshed, for the next seventy-five years and until 1759 when, at the Battle of Quebec, the French Army under General Montcalm was defeated by General Wolfe.

In 1760, when Montreal capitulated to General Amherst, the French regime in Canada was at an end.

After the English took over Canada, they soon had to face a competition more intense and relentless than that of the French.

In 1784 a group of merchants of Montreal, mostly Scotch and at first operating as individuals, quickly picked up the threads of the fur trade and employed the same voyageurs, half-breeds and Indians, who had been employed by the French over a long period of time.

These Scotch traders were a canny lot, and rapidly cut into the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company, for while the control of the Hudson's Bay Company was in the hands of a group, mostly noblemen, with headquarters in London, the "partners", which had become the North West Company, were on the spot mixing with the Indians and getting the trade.

In 1801 Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the noted explorer who descended the river which bears his name to its mouth in the Arctic, and who is credited with being the first white man to cross the North American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, became the President of the North West Company. Coincident with Mackenzie's active interest in the North West Company, a number of top employees of the Hudson's Bay Company went over and joined its rival. Among this number was the noted astronomer and geologist, David Thompson.

David Thompson, of whome J. B. Tyrrell, who discovered his instruments and notebooks in an attic in northern Ontario seventy-five years after his death, says, "He was the greatest geographer who ever lived, since with the crudest instruments he surveyed accurately one million two hundred thousand square miles in Canada and half that much in the United States". He surveyed the 49th parallel, the dividing line between Canada and the United States, and in 1811 he descended the Columbia River to its mouth and arrived there less than a month after John Jacob Astor's ship "Tonquin" entered the mouth of the Columbia, where its Captain planted the American Flag, and called the place "Astoria".

It is during this time between 1801 and 1811 that Thomas Douglas, the Fifth Earl of Selkirk, enters our story.

Selkirk was the youngest of seven sons and naturally never expected to inherit the title. He had graduated at the University of Edinburgh and specialized in literature and sociology. He was an intimate friend of Sir Walter Scott and frequently entertained the people's poet, "Bobby Burns", at his table.

On the First of these occasions, Burns was asked to say the blessing, which he did in his native dialect as follows:

"Some hae meat and canna eat
And Some wad eat that want it -
But we hae meat, and we can eat
An sae the Lord be thanket"

During the American Revolution, when Selkirk was a small boy, the American patriot, John Paul Jones, who was Captain of the American small gunboat "The Ranger", invaded the Selkirk Castle with the idea of taking the Earl prisoner and holding him to force the

British to an exchange of prisoners. Paul was a native of these parts and knew the territory well. The Earl was away from home, so Paul and his seamen carried off the gold and silver plate. John Paul evidently had remorse, for later he purchased the plate back from his seamen and returned it to Lady Selkirk."

After the Revolution had ended and the American Colonies got their independence, John Paul served in the Russian and French Navies and died in Paris in 1792. His remains were brought back to the United States in 1905 and were later buried in the Crypt of the United States Naval Academy Chapel at Annapolis, Maryland, in 1913.

Selkirk early became interested in the sad condition of his countrymen, particularly the Highland Scotch workers and small farmers, who for many years had suffered serious economic hardship and whose prospects for a better standard of living were steadily growing worse.

Thousands of Scotchmen were migrating to the United States, but little if anything had been done by the British Government in their behalf. There were many reasons for this serious situation, and among them were the American War of Independence, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Law barring all British ships and goods from continental ports.

The most serious and immediate reason, as far as the Highland Scotch were concerned, was a law changing radically the social system of the Highlands. The Clan System had been in vogue for hundreds of years; the "Laird" was head of the Clan and the members looked to him for protection. He had the large holding of land including the castle, but the Clan members occupied small farms and considered they had title to the land. Following an uprising of the Clansmen against their Chieftains, the British Government forc-

ibly suppressed the uprising, confiscated their lands and gave them to the Chiefs, with the result that many of the small farmers were evicted.

Selkirk, following the death of his brothers, inherited the Earldom with all its holdings; he was not a Highlander but took a deep interest in all of his countrymen. He carefully studied the situation, visited the Highlands and finally decided that emigration was the only solution.

After many letters to British Statesmen and personal appearances before Parliament, Selkirk was able to get an allotment of land for a colony in Prince Edward Island, Canada. In July 1803, three ships sailed from Scotch and Irish ports with eight hundred settlers. This Colony was a success from the beginning, and today several of our most respected citizens in St. Paul are descendants of these original settlers. This small colony, however, did not meet the requirements and finally Selkirk decided upon the Red River of the North - since it was in the domain of the Hudson's Bay Company in which he and his wife had a controlling interest.

This being prairie country and of great fertility, Selkirk argued that the Colonists could begin planting their crops at once without first having to clear the land of trees.

Selkirk had been negotiating with the British Government and his associates of the Hudson's Bay Company for several years, during which time the North West Company, headed by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, was doing everything possible to forestall the venture, an important reason being that the two companies were rivals and the great region involved was one of their most important fur-bearing areas.

Selkirk continued in spite of opposition and in Feb-

ruary 1811 he succeeded in getting a majority of the Governing Board of the Hudson's Bay Company to permit him to go ahead with the project of organizing a colony on the Red River of the North. Selkirk wished to make this a personal venture, so he purchased the immense territory of one hundred and sixteen thousand square miles from the Hudson's Bay Company. This area began on the South Shore of Lake Winnipeg and extended south on both sides of the Red River into what are now the States of North Dakota and Minnesota.

The recruiting of settlers from Scotland was now actively begun, which was at once opposed by the agents of the North West Company headed by Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

Mackenzie wrote Selkirk a letter in which he said that if Selkirk persisted in going on with the Colony on Red River, he and his associates would do everything in their power to defeat the project.

In the first group of settlers which sailed from Stornoway, Scotland, July 26, 1811, there were to be no women or children.

Of the large number recruited there were only one hundred and five on the ship when it sailed. Many of the better class had been persuaded by the "North Westers" that the whole scheme was a farce and that Selkirk was crazy. There were three ships: the "Edward and Anne", which carried most of the settlers, the "Prince of Wales" and the "Eddistone", which carried the officers and indentured personnel of the Hudson's Bay Company and the equipment. "The weather throughout the voyage was bad and when the ships landed at York Factory on the west coast of

Hudson's Bay, September 25th, 1811, the passengers were a sorry looking lot." "The voyage had consumed sixty-one days, the longest time ever known to the Hudson's Bay Company."

To arrive at their destination on the Red River, they still had seven hundred miles to go and the only means of getting there were on foot, by canoe or by some other type of small craft. The season was so late that it was finally decided the entire company should winter at York Factory, a Hudson's Bay post, and that separate barracks should be built for the settlers, separate from the personnel of the Hudson's Bay Company.

It was a long cold winter and before Spring arrived there was serious squabbling and almost mutiny, and many of the men were suffering from scurvy.

"To meet this serious situation, Macdonnell, the Governor, resorted to Jacques Cartier's remedy, a drink prepared from the leaves of the white spruce; and as a result only one man died." The company had undoubtedly been fed on ship's fare: bread, cooked oatmeal, salt pork and dried and salt fish. Had they known what was pointed out one hundred years later, and eaten some of the game and fish raw or slightly cooked, including the liver or other vital organs, they would have avoided scurvy and been well nourished: or had they eaten some of the wild berries they would have been protected from scurvy.

"During April and May there was plenty of wild game and from April 27th to May 15th no less than three thousand deer crossed the river below the camp."

"The ice usually left the Hays and Nelson Rivers the end of May or early June, but in the spring of 1812 it was coming down after the middle of June."

"Macdonnell had several flat bottom boats built during the winter and the supplies were piled on these and the Hays River with its chain of connecting lakes was chosen instead of the Nelson with its many rapids."

"On July 6th the Company made a start on their seven hundred mile trek with numerous portages where boats and goods had to be carried considerable distances over unbroken trails." The Company reached Norway House, a Hudson's Bay post north of Lake Winnipeg, on August 15, 1812, having covered four hundred and thirty miles in five weeks. After resting several days, they continued their journey and arrived at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers August 30th; the entire trip of seven hundred miles having been made in fifty-five days.

Selkirk had given directions long in advance that when the first group of settlers arrived at the Forks, barracks should be ready to house them and that plenty of food should be procured and stored for the winter. The fact was, however, that there was little or no preparation made for them.

Soon after their arrival a delegation from the North West Company arrived and informed those in charge that settlers were not wanted and it was intimated that serious consequences would follow any attempt to establish a colony on the Red River.

"Governor Macdonnell informed them that the Red River Valley belonged to Lord Selkirk, and that if anyone was forced to go elsewhere it would be the North West Company's fur traders and not the colonists."

"The ceremony of taking possession took place on September 4th and at his camp on the east side of

the River, Macdonnell, with a guard of officers under arms and with colors flying, took possession in the name of the Earl of Selkirk." "A site for the encampment was chosen and temporary barracks were built."

The scarcity of food soon became apparent and owing to the hostility of the North West Company it was not probable that food could be purchased from them, but it soon became known that the traders and employees of both companies were almost as badly off for food as were the Colonists.

The reason for this was that the winter of 1811-12 had been the most severe the Northwest had experienced in more than twenty years and even the Indians, owing to the shortage of pemmican, were reduced to the most "horrible and revolting" means of eaking out an existence.

After carefully surveying the whole situation, Macdonnell concluded that to keep the whole company there would be very dangerous, so he decided to send most of them up the River to Pembina, a distance of ninety miles, at the junction of the Red and the Pembina Rivers, since it was generally known that great herds of buffalo frequented that area and the Indians usually killed a sufficient number in order to make pemmican for the winter. Owing to the terrible experience of the preceding winter, an extra large amount had been made, so Macdonnell felt sure he could purchase enough from the Indians to carry the Colony through the coming winter.

I must here digress to give a brief explanation concerning pemmican.

"Pemmican is the North American Cree Indian word for a meat prepared in such a way as to contain

the greatest amount of nourishment in the most compact form, as made by certain North American Indians." It is composed of the lean meat of the buffalo cut in strips and dried in the sun or before a fire, then pounded or shredded finely and mixed into a paste with the melted fat. It is often flavored by mixing in crushed wild berries such as the saskatoon or cranberries. It is then packed into sacks made from the buffalo hides with the fur side out and sealed up with rawhide and tallow. If kept dry it will keep for an indefinite time.

The Plains Indians were meat-eaters and unlike their brothers farther south they did no farming but depended almost wholly upon the chase and largely upon the buffalo.

"On September 9th Macdonnell, accompanied by three men, set out on horseback for Pembina; some boatloads of food and equipment had preceded him by three days."

On September 13th, 1812, Macdonnell chose a site for a fort which he called "Daer" on the south side of the Pembina River at the junction with the Red, and all hands at once began the construction of a warehouse and barracks. An old trading post of the North West Company across the River was reoccupied by them when it was known that the Selkirk Colony was to be located there, this for the purpose of observing the Colony and embarrassing them in every possible way they could, as Alexander Mackenzie had promised they would do. By October 1st, the storehouse and barracks were completed, and up to this time food had been plentiful, since the natives brought in buffalo meat, berries and prairie turnips in abundance. "A team of horses and a harrow had been purchased from the natives

and a few acres of winter wheat were sown and harrowed in."

By November 20th winter had set in in earnest, and by December the prairie was covered with snow and the cold was more intense than the colonists had ever experienced. Hardly had the first contingent been settled than the second group of settlers arrived. This group had been picked with the idea that they would be permanent colonists; it consisted of a number of families and there were several young women of marriageable age, also a few children.

The winter of 1812-13 was also a hard one and in fact it was the most severe experienced by the Northwest in thirty years and "had it not been for the pemmican purchased from the Indians, the settlers would have starved to death".

"In the spring of 1813, considerable grain and potatoes were planted." The Colony had one cow, a heifer, and a bull which Selkirk had purchased from the North West Company for five hundred dollars." The bull became so fierce it had to be slaughtered for beef.

In 1813 the North West Company had a number of trading posts scattered throughout the Hudson's Bay area and several close by in the Red River Valley. The Hudson's Bay Company regarded the North West Company as poachers, and so after a long debate with his associates, Macdonnell the Governor issued a proclamation, asserting Selkirk's title to the land and prohibiting the export of pemmican from the territory; not only was the export of pemmican prohibited but all stores of it within the territory were seized.

This was a serious blow to the North West Com-

pany, since the area around Pembina was the chief source of pemmican. The embargo enraged the employees and dependants of the North West Company, who were mostly French and Indian half-breeds, since pemmican was their chief food during the long cold winters.

Following this embargo there was a constantly rising tempo of violence, and often bloodshed between the two groups, and on June 16, 1816, came the Massacre of Seven Oaks, when twenty-three of the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, including Governor Semple, were massacred by the "bois-brulee."

The North West Company - and rightly, as was later proven - was accused of having put firearms in the hands of the murderers and urged them on to the deed. After the massacre the North West Company drove the settlers from the Colony and set fire to all their buildings, so that the North Westers thought the Selkirk Colony was at an end.* Sixty members of the Colony found shelter at Norway House, a Hudson's Bay post on the northern end of Lake Winnipeg, and there waited to hear their fate from Selkirk, who was in Montreal. When the news of the mass-

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*It was during this period of mounting hostility against the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company that John Smith, having been forewarned of what was coming, left Red River with his wife Mary and daughter Jean; they got to Fort William and from there by canoe to Sault St. Marie, then down the lakes to Niagara Falls, where he started a small factory at the end of Lake Ontario. There Jean met my grandfather, Robert Ramsey, and married him, and thus became my grandmother and John Smith my great grandfather.

acre reached him, he decided to recruit a company of soldiers, transport them by canoe to Fort William and from there block all transport of furs from the North West Company east of Sault St. Marie. This he did and in the spring of 1817 he attacked Pembina from the south and retook Fort Daer, rebuilt the barracks and brought back the Colonists, who had been cared for at various Hudson's Bay posts.

In 1818 there were only 222 souls in this Colony: Scotch, 151; Swiss, 45; French-Canadian, 26. "For seed that spring, Macdonnell could muster only 142 bushels of wheat, 53 of barley and 475 of potatoes." The shortage of seed was due largely to a severe drought and an epidemic of grasshoppers which had destroyed almost every green thing in the area; and so the Colony, being made up chiefly of hardy Scots and Swiss, began again its upward climb.

During the spring of 1819, a small group of Hudson's Bay officers and employees made their way up the Red River to its source - Lake Traverse, then over the divide to the headquarters of the Minnesota River - Big Stone Lake, thence to Fort Snelling and down the Mississippi to Prairie du Chien. Here they purchased the following supplies: 250 bushels of wheat, 100 bushels of oats, 30 bushels of peas and some chickens. These supplies were placed on a flatboat and the company proceeded back the way they came to Pembina and Fort Garry, now Winnipeg. "These supplies cost Selkirk $5200 at the then rate of exchange."

"The seed did not reach the Colony until well into June; it was planted at once and grew well" and the Colony was again saved from starvation.

It now became known that a part of the Selkirk

holdings were south of the 49th parallel and were in the United States, so Selkirk lost title to all the land below the line, Pembina and Fort Daer being included in the area.

As a result, many of the settlers went north of the border into Canada, but some stayed and entered the employ of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, the Minnesota headquarters being at Grand Forks and Pembina. Others wandered south and took up land around Fort Snelling and in the triangle between the St. Croix and the Mississippi Rivers. A number of the descendants of these original settlers still live in and around St. Paul.

After re-establishing his Colony in 1817, Selkirk returned to Montreal by way of Mendota, Prairie du Chien, St. Louis, Washington and New York. In Washington he took up the matter of regaining title to the property south of the 49th parallel with his attorney, Daniel Webster, but after consulation he decided it would be better to drop the matter for the time being, since there was now active competition with the American Fur Company, and besides it was too soon after the War of 1812-14 and the burning of the White House was still fresh in the minds of the American people.

When Selkirk reached Montreal, he was arrested at the instigation of the North West Company, but was almost immediately released on bail; it was not difficult to prove that the accusations against him were false and he was finally acquitted.

His health had been sadly undermined by exposure and the anxiety of the long fight and he returned to Scotland in the fall of 1818. He soon began to have hemorrhage from the lungs and his physicians ordered him to Pau in southern France. He never returned home and died in Pau on April 8, 1820.

Just twenty-seven days after Selkirk's death his rival, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, died in his palatial home in Scotland to which he had retired; and so, the long "Pemmican War" was at an end.

In 1821, under Selkirk's son, the new Earl of Selkirk, the two companies, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company were united to bear the name of the Hudson's Bay Company.

When Selkirk left his Colony in 1817, it looked very dubious whether it would survive, but new settlers continued to arrive from Scotland and Switzerland and in the face of great odds it became a permanent settlement.

The Scotch generally made good farmers, as most of them had been farmers in Scotland, but many of the Swiss were of German, French and Italian backgrounds and were mostly ex-soldiers, watchmakers, musicians and, in fact, almost anything else but farmers, and besides they did not get on very well with their Scotch neighbors. As a result, many of the Swiss later gave up their farms and wandered to the cities of the United States where they could ply their respective trades.

In spite of all these losses, the Colony continued to grow and in 1831 an experimental farm was established four miles from Fort Garry, under the expert direction of Chief Factor Robert Campbell, who had had special experience on his father's sheep farm in Perthshire.

In 1832 Campbell, with a small group started for Prairie du Chien and other places in Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri to secure a flock of sheep for the Colony. They left Fort Garry November 8

and reached Prairie du Chien December 15th and on December 20th they reached Rock Island. By May 1st they had acquired 1100 sheep and lambs and by May 15th the number had grown to 1370 and they had begun their march back to Fort Garry.

On August 21 they crossed the Minnesota River at Traverse des Sioux (now St. Peter) and the flock of 1370 had, through disease, speargrass and various other factors dwindled to 295. "The spears worked into the flesh of the sheep, causing putrifying sores which were infested with maggots; then mortification set in and the result was the death of the victim." "On September 16th they reached Fort Garry and got the sheep and horses across the River before dark."

Chief Factor Robert Campbell concludes his report by saying, "Thus terminated our long, harassing and dangerous trip; a trip which was most disappointing in its results."

"The most of our trouble and the diminution of our flock was brought about by the wild speargrass and our total ignorance of its existence, and also to our lack of experience which we bought at so dear a price."

The Colonists, as well as all employees and traders, were expected to do all their business, that is, sell their furs and other produce and purchase all their supplies through the Hudson's Bay Company; but as early as 1821 there was considerable illicit trade crossing the border in both directions. The American Fur Company had established posts at various points, including Pembina and many furs found their way there and at a better price than could be secured from the parent company, and by barter they got the things they wanted, including poor whiskey, in return. This trade continued to grow, and in 1840 Joe

Rolette* who had been agent for the American Fur Company at Pembina, started "The Ox-cart Brigade" between Pembina and St. Paul to take care of the rapidly growing trade with the infant Colony around St. Paul and St. Anthony.

By 1849, when Minnesota was made a Territory, with Alexander Ramsey as its first Governor, there were several hundred ox-carts plying between Pembina and St. Paul, and the value of the goods exceeded five hundred thousand dollars a year.

In August 1851 Governor Ramsey, with a number of associates escorted by 25 dragoons from Fort Snelling, left St. Paul with the idea of making a treaty with the Chippewa Indians from the Red Lake and Pembina districts.

The company left St. Paul August 18th and arrived at Pembina, a distance of about five hundred miles, September 12th.

"They camped on the prairie every night and their baggage and provisions were carried on six two-horse baggage-wagons. The personal equipment of

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*This is the same Joe Rolette who in 1857, as a member of the Minnesota Legislature from Pembina, ran away with the Bill passed by the Minnesota Territorial Legislature removing the Capitol from St. Paul to St. Peter, thus saving the Capitol to St. Paul. A life-size portrait of Joe Rolette in semi-Indian dress hangs on the wall of the dining room in the Minnesota Club in St. Paul. Contrary to what is generally believed, Joe Rolette, son of a partner of John Jacob Astor at Prairie du Chien, had a college education which he received in Cincinnati, during which time he lived in the family of the future Bishop Grace of St. Paul, Minnesota.

the Governor and his associates was carried on light Red River Carts with eight French Canadian half-breed drivers."

In addition to the food they took along, which included pemmican and jerky, they killed an occasional buffalo for fresh meat. "Of this they cut out the tongue and some choice steaks and left the remainder for the coyotes and vultures."

"Before reaching Pembina they were met by Norman W. Kitson and Joe Rolette, and on arrival Mr. Kitson turned over his house to Governor Ramsey for his private and official use."

"After several days the Chiefs assembled and were arranged in a semicircle sitting on the ground in front of which at a table sat the Governor and his secretary, Dr. Foster."

"Back of the Chiefs were Indians, half-breeds, squaws and their papooses, and a goodly number of dogs, large and wolfish."

The Indians were restless, and an old Chief kept interrupting the Governor as he talked through his interpreter. Finally the Governor asked what the old Chief wanted, to which he replied that "Indians no more than white men can deliberate on empty stomachs". Whereby the Governor adjourned the meeting and distributed the food, tobacco and other presents brought for the Indians.

After two days of feasting, the meeting was reconvened and the treaty was finally signed by the Indians and the Governor, but for some reason was never ratified by the United States Senate.

After the conference, the Governor and his party visited the Selkirk Colony at Fort Garry, and

J. W. Bond, who accompanied the party and reported the expedition in the St. Paul Pioneer in 1851-52 and later in a book "Minnesota Resources" published in Boston in 1856, says: "The Selkirk Colony now (1851), has a population of 7500, exclusive of half-breeds and Indians. It has several churches which would do credit to any western settlement in the United States." "The Congregation of each is large and the Episcopalians have a fine Academy with spacious grounds attached; the Catholics have a big stone church and five priests." "The character of the people for industry, education and morality is most excellent."

Here was a large, educated, thriving community practically isolated from the outside world; England was more than four thousand miles distant, and yet they were expected to do all their business through the Hudson's Bay Company. No wonder they were "up in arms" against this tyranny and, disregarding the imaginary line between Canada and the United States, crossed it to barter their goods at Pembina, which was only a few hundred miles distant by river and ox-cart from a rapidly growing market at St. Paul.

In 1856 James J. Hill came to St. Paul and was employed as shipping clerk for the Steamboat Company

In 1855 there were 563 steamboat arrivals at the dock in St. Paul; this contrasted with 104 five years earlier.

In 1865 James J. Hill organized the Northwest Packet Company and in 1866, with a partner, Egbert S. Litchfield, added a fuel business under the name of James J. Hill & Company, which did business by way of the Red River and Pem-

bina with the Selkirk Colony at Fort Garry.

In 1869 James J. Hill formed a partnership with Chancey W. Griggs, grandfather of the present heads of Griggs, Cooper & Company of St. Paul, for transportation on the Red River. In 1870 Hill and Griggs built the steamboat "Selkirk", which carried goods from Grand Forks to Pembina and Fort Garry.

The goods were carted by horse-team from St. Paul to Grand Forks or below, depending upon the stage of water in the Red River.

In this same year 1869, the Dominion Government purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company "Rupert's Land", which had been given it by the treaty of 1670, for the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars.

"The Hudson's Bay Company thereby lost all rights of government but retained the right to pursue the fur trade as a private company and to retain all posts and stations and to select a block of land adjoining each post."

In 1872 Norman W. Kitson, for years the agent of the American Fur Company and more recently in the transportation business between Pembina and St. Paul as a competitor of James J. Hill, joined him as a partner.

In the depression of 1873, the St. Paul and Pacific Railway collapsed financially, and Hill and Kitson, with the help of Sir Donald Smith, President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, were able to get control of the Railway through acquiring the bonds, owned chiefly in Holland. Smith was anxious to get an outlet south into the United States for the Canadian Pacific, and by 1878

Hill had succeeded in constructing a line to the Canadian border at St. Vincent to meet a line built by the Canadian Pacific.*

By 1893 the St. Paul and Pacific Ry. had been extended to the Pacific Coast by James J. Hill under the name of the Great Northern Railway.

The Ox Cart, and in turn the Steamboat on the Red River, had given way to the railroad and in turn the railroad, in part at least, has given way to the truck and the aeroplane. What changes, Atomic Energy will bring remains for the future to disclose.

And so we have come to the end of our story of the Selkirk Colony, born far beyond the borders of civilization, in 1811. It had a hard struggle for life but it survived and has become the fine City of Winnipeg, the Capitol of the Great Commonwealth of Manitoba.

The Twin Cities, born thirty years later, also had their difficulties to overcome, but they too grew and prospered, and it is not only interesting to relate, but a vital fact to cherish for the future, that all through their lives Winnipeg and the Twin Cities have cooperated closely with each other and to mutual advantage. It is our earnest hope that down through the years they may so continue.

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*The coincidence of relationship may have increased my interest in the Selkirk Colony and the Red River development. My great grandfather, John Smith, and Sir Donald Smith, both Hudson's Bay employees, were kinsmen. Thomas Ramsey, Captain of the S. S. "Edistone", who made annual voyages from England to Hudson's Bay between 1797

and 1815, also to Russian and Mediterranean Ports, was a kinsman of mine. He received an annual salary of 300 pounds sterling, and if he brought his ship home safely he got a 30-pound bonus. Governor Alexander Ramsey and I have a common ancestor, Alexander Ramsey. James Jerome Hill and my mother were first cousins.

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